

Astrid and the Laptop

by Rays of Color

Category: How to Train Your Dragon

Genre: Friendship, Humor

Language: English

Characters: Hiccup, Toothless

Status: In-Progress

Published: 2011-09-13 19:24:59

Updated: 2012-03-24 19:28:13

Packaged: 2016-04-26 12:56:37

Rating: K+

Chapters: 6

Words: 8,881

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: One shot with a modern setting. Hiccup is the school geek. Astrid is a star athlete. So what does a laptop have anything to do with it? Now a series of connected one-shots

1. Chapter 1

A/N: Just a quick one-shot that I had to write up. Somehow, the idea of a modern HTTYD popped in my head, and I instantly knew Hiccup was the computer geek/school genius shunned by everyone because he was so smart he became socially awkward (it really happens; people with extremely high IQs tend to be unable to relate to others and become estranged.) Well, that and Hiccup's just an awkward person. But adorable.

Totally adorable.

So I had to type out this quick little story, with Astrid asking Hiccup for help. And yes, I know Astrid doesn't behave as she does in the movie. But she has no need to be vicious here; she's not a warrior, she's a teenager in the modern world. And I thought swim team would explain her slim figure. Swimmers, at least as far as I can tell, tend to be lean. So yeah. And it's not stereotypical, like her being a soccer girl or cheerleader or something. Yeah.

So just a cute little snippet for you all to enjoy! Let me know what you think! By the way, this is my first post here on !

* * *

><p>Hiccup Horrendous Haddock III was currently in his school's library, laptop open on the desk in front of him. The teenager swiped uneven bangs out of his face, brows furrowing as he hunched over his laptop. He prided himself on being highly intelligent, bordering on genius status, but even this was tough for him. Biology wasn't much his thing, and reading about complex, multi-gene mutations that

caused bizarre defects in skin tone on his favorite Web-Encyclopedia (which was much more reliable than those stuffy teachers made it out to be, especially on scientific subjects) took more concentration than he initially thought. Anything pertaining to Calculus (even multivariable), engineering, robotics, or physics was a piece of cake to him, even the tough stuff (really, he didn't understand why physics was so hard to people! It just made such simple sense! Calc and the rest he could understand how people found it difficult, but physics just seemed to click in his mind.).<p>

But this?

Hiccup loathed biology. Sure, he aced the basic class required of him freshman year, and even the AP Bio he took last year as a sophomore, (hey, he was a near-genius. High-school classes, even advanced ones, would never be a problem for him. He longed for college, and nearly salivated over the idea of a class that actually challenged his intellect. In reality, he should have been able to skip more than one grade, possibly even start university this past year, but he'd had to fight his father tooth and nail even to get ahead by one year. His dad was a retired pro football coach, and even now volunteered his time with the high-school team. For the past two years their team had been nigh undefeated. But more on that later.) but never had he delved into anything deeper. And now he wish he hadn't.

But Hiccup was doing this for his new friend, his best friend.

His only friend.

For his entire life, Hiccup had been horribly awkward, both in body and in social situations. He was pale, freckled, and extraordinarily scrawny. He had a mop of dark auburn hair, and a long nose that, although not too big for his face, was rather bulbous on the tip. He was rather short, and could neither gain weight nor muscle to save his life. Both his parents were of a different build. His father, the admired football coach, was a huge man in both height and girth. His mother, or what he could remember of her, wasn't as tall or as wide, but was still a sturdy woman. From pictures, he could see she had toned arms, all to be expected of a girl's club basketball coach, and a former pro tennis player. For all her less-than-modelesque figure, she had a very pretty face, and stunning green eyes.

Eyes that Hiccup inherited from her, and one of the few things he liked about himself.

The fifteen year old was a junior in high school. He was the youngest in the grade by far, due to the fact that he skipped a grade in middle school. This, compounded with his awkwardness and weak appearance, made him a target for bullying. He'd been physically bullied a couple times, but more often than not the worst was the laughter. In class, in hallways, at lunch, there was scarcely a week that past when someone didn't point and laugh at the school freak. More often than even that was the whispers and pointed looks of his peers whenever he answered a particularly hard question or the teacher praised his work.

So it was only natural that he had no friends. His friends from elementary school became estranged when he skipped a grade, thinking he though he was better than them, and his new classmates just sneered at the little upstart. Hiccup therefore developed the defense

mechanism of becoming very solitary, as well as very sarcastic when approached by his peers.

But when he saw another person just as lonely as himself...he saw himself, and reached out to the other solitary soul.

Toothless, as Hiccup had nicknamed the other boy, was a loner. Considered a freak by the populace for something entirely out of his control, he developed a reputation of being fearsome, aggressive, and dangerous. There were rumors (entirely false, by the way) that he was a gang leader, or a gang member, or according to some, the right hand man of a drug lord.

Toothless, whose birth name was Theodore, and nicknamed by the other kids as "the Fang" or "the Fury", had a rare birth defect. His skin, when exposed to the sun, turned a dark, dark blue, very nearly black. Indoors, it became white as a cotton sheet. And it was rough, almost scaly in texture. His teeth were slightly more pointed than normal, and his ears had several odd scaly points to each one. He only recently transferred to Berk High, and shortly after seeing the new boy on campus, Hiccup has hesitantly approached him, and over time, befriended him.

Toothless, Hiccup learned, was fiercely loyal and a great friend. The taller, oddly-skinned boy was also intelligent and funny, and for once Hiccup felt acceptance around his new friend. So the near-genius had put his efforts to researching Toothless' condition, seeing if there was anything to be done for his friend's sake.

So far, it was slow going.

Suddenly, the sounds of footsteps reached his ears. Hiccup could tell from the pace of the approach that it wasn't Toothless, who had a very distinct, lanky gait. The person stopped just behind his shoulder. Hiccup hated the feeling of people looking over his shoulder, and his irritation mounted.

"I'm not doing your homework for you. So don't even bother asking."

"I was actually going to ask you for advice," a somewhat deep, but distinctly feminine voice replied, thick with amusement. Hiccup jumped in surprise, and turned his head with wide green eyes.

"Astrid! Hi! Uh, hi, Astrid! Er, sorry, I didn't realize..." he trailed off, twisting around in his chair uncomfortably to look at the girl. She was, and had been, his crush for two years now. They were in the same grade, but to Hiccup she was as distant as the stars. The girl had thick, beautiful blond hair past her shoulders and stunning blue eyes. A small spattering of faint freckles spread across her little nose, and her cheeks and lips were perfectly pink. Hiccup long thought she was perfect " smart and socially graceful and an amazing athlete. Oh yeah, athlete. Although not captain, she was named "MVP" of the high school swim team ever since joining as a freshman. She was the fastest swimmer on the team, and was faster even then all the guys. She'd won her races at the high school championship since freshman year, and there were even rumors circulating that she was training for the Olympics. Of course, Hiccup guessed it was just a rumor, due to their high school's knack for

rumor-circulating, but one never knew.

"It's alright," she waved his explanation off. Up close, he could see some small imperfections; a scar right underneath her each of her eyebrows, on the outside corner of her eyes, very faint. He could see the marks of a tan she had from her 'goggles', disguised by a sheer layer of makeup. He even saw a scar right in the center of her lower lip, just faintly darker than the pink of her lips.

He tried his best not to think about her lips too much. That would be bad, and he would end up doing something stupid.

"I was actually hoping you could help me," she said, shifting her weight from her heels to the balls of her feet and back again, in what Hiccup guessed was a nervous habit. "It's my computer. I can't get it to start up, and because everyone knows you're the resident computer genius, I figured I would ask you. No one in my family knows enough about computers, and there's an essay due in my English class on Friday, so..." with the hand that wasn't holding her laptop (how had he not noticed that earlier?), she brushed her blond bangs out of her face, biting her lower lip anxiously.

Oh, maybe that was how she got that scar on her lip. From biting it...

No! Bad thoughts!

Hiccup blushed, hoped Astrid wasn't paying enough attention to his face to notice, and cleared his throat nervously.

"Uh," he stopped short as his voice came out an octave higher than normal. He cleared his throat again. "Yeah, yeah, no problem."

Astrid handed him the laptop, and he blushed again as their hands brushed in the exchange. Hoping to distract himself, he popped open the computer, hit the start button, and waited.

The screen lit up briefly, then flashed blue for a split second before returning to a primitive black screen with scrolling white text that spelled out some gibberish about 'proper restart' and 'cognitive function' being hindered. Hiccup frowned, testing a few basic troubleshoots, and Astrid leaned in to watch. He tried not to get distracted by the fact that he could feel her body heat, smell her breath (it was minty, but faintly so, like the scent left by toothpaste after a few hours), and her chin nearly touched his shoulder. Her hair fell over his shoulder, covering the green of his long-sleeved shirt with golden strands. Focus, Hiccup!

It took a minute, but he was able to load her computer, then shut it down and restart it to make sure the problem was taken care of.

With a touch of reluctance, for she would have no more cause to be around him, he handed her back her laptop.

"There, all fixed," he said, a small smile on his face. The girl took it with a much broader grin, her expression positively radiant.

"Oh, thank you! You are a genius! Thank you so, so much. You're a life saver! I was about ready to jump off a cliff if it didn't start

working!" she laughed, smiling at him as he never dreamed she would.

"Well, I don't think a computer is really worth suicide," he tried to joke, but was cut off by Astrid when she kissed his cheek.

"Thank you, really," she said when she pulled back. Hiccup watched her walk away, too stunned to move or speak or even blush.

"Oh, and Hiccup?" she paused, turning.

"Yeah?" he croaked out, voice hoarse.

"Don't be afraid to say 'hi' in the halls or in class or whatever. I know I'm not the nicest or most approachable person around...but I wouldn't mind talking to you. Just so you know."

And with that, the girl left completely, leaving Hiccup to watch as her blue-tank-top-and-jeans-clad- figure retreated.

Well, now he really wouldn't get any research done.

He didn't know that he wouldn't have to say 'hi' to Astrid in the halls tomorrow. She would actually start the exchange.

* * *

><p>Don't forget to review! I'd love your input. :D<p>

2. Author's NoteReview Response

A/N: thank you so much for all your enthusiastic reviews. In response to multiple questions, no I am not currently planning on turning this into a full fledged story. College classes (specifically multiple math/science ones) will be eating up most of my time. However, I think "Astrid and the Laptop" got enough support for me to continue this story in the form of related one-shots. This way, I'll be able to satisfy your curiosity without having to construct a full story. My schedule will allow for far more one-shots than story chapters. SO NEVER FEAR! You will get to (eventually) meet other characters.

(also, I have no story plot for this thing. It's more of a character excersize than anything)

So stay tuned!

~Rays of Color

3. New Boy

Hiccup Horrendous Haddock III arrived at school for another day of drudgery. The the boy was scrawny, highly intelligent, and the biggest geek Berk High had seen in years. The fifteen-year-old was also the youngest junior in the school by almost a full year.

He was also a total loner.

So, Hiccup walked through campus, expecting nothing more than another day of work, loneliness, and general boredom. He hauled his backpack on one thin shoulder, and tromped across the chilly school grounds. By the time he reached the library, his green jacket had failed entirely to keep him warm, and he shivered from head to toe. Once inside, the boy unzipped his jacket, eager to let in the heat from the warm library. Hiccup shook his head, trying to rid himself of the little droplets of dew that accumulated on his hair on the walk over.

He plopped into an empty seat " well, they were really all empty at seven-fifteen in the morning. He yanked out his laptop, and with a few taps on the mouse-pad opened his browser. He wanted to check out a news article on physics that he'd only had time to glance at last night, and before long he was completely engrossed, and only the ringing of the first bell nearly an hour later broke his concentration. The boy stumbled off to his first class, tripping over a chair on his way out, and rushed to English. As anticipated, he was utterly bored for all fifty-three minutes of the period.

Finally, the bell rang, and Hiccup shuffled through the halls to his Calculus class. Oblivious as always, he did not notice the unusually loud buzz of conversation that morning. His walk to second period remained uninterrupted by the new, juicy gossip.

Luckily for Hiccup, his Calculus class went by much faster than English " due, of course, to the fact that he actually liked math. Then it was off to French class, then Chemistry, and finally lunch.

Oh, and it was at lunch that everything happened.

Hiccup was making his way to an empty table in the cafeteria, on way at the back of the room that no one ever occupied. Naturally, it was not a smooth walk. No, he got a hearty shove from his cousin, Shaun. Referred to by both friends and enemies as "Snotlout" or "Snot", Shaun was a football player for the high school. He wasn't particularly talented, but he still got the same "popular" status as all the other football jocks.

Snot, with his bulkiness, jeered along with his just-as-bulky friends as Hiccup sprawled sideways into a table. There was a smack as his hipbone hit the edge. Hiccup groaned in pain and clutched the spot. He had only a thin layer of skin to protect his rather weak skeleton " there was no padding on him in either the form of muscle or fat. Luckily, nothing broke, but he would be left with a nasty bruise within an hour or two.

"Watch where you walk, loser!" Snot shouted over his shoulder as he and his friends strutted away. Some people laughed at the encounter, others chuckled awkwardly. Hiccup felt his face flush red, and quickly ducked his head and scurried away. His reddish-brown hair served to curtain his face, even if only a little, and he hastily sat down at his table before anyone else could torment him. Five minutes passed, and then a sudden hush descended over the cafeteria. Hiccup looked up in alarm " what was going on?

Everyone was looking towards the doors. A dark figure approached, with long strides and fully illuminated by the sunlight. It was a boy, perhaps a year or so older than Hiccup, and definitely new to

the school. What made this new person so peculiar was his appearance. Right as he approached the entrance, Hiccup could see the details " the boy was tall, and seemed to be powerfully built in a lean way " more of a runner or lacrosse player type build than a football one. He had dark, dark black hair, maybe two or three inches long. Most interestingly, though, was his skin. It was dark blue, almost black, gleaming in the sunshine. There were people with lots of different ranges of skin colors at Berk High, but this dark blue was bewildering, to say the least.

The stranger entered the cafeteria, head high, expression set. He met the stares of the other students without any sign of shame or embarrassment. Cool as a cucumber, he walked through the cafeteria towards the foodstand. As he passed from the sunlight to the shaded room, a transformation took place that caused a collective gasp in the room.

The stranger's dark blue skin suddenly lost all coloring, going white. His dark hair stood out even more starkly, his features " on someone else they would probably be classified as good-looking, but all he managed was ethereal " looking literally like the marble of roman sculptures.

The cafeteria remained silent for thirty seconds, before bursting out into a tumultuous chatter. The strange newcomer paid for his things, and made a final glance around the room. For a second, Hiccup thought he saw the proud, untouchable expression on the other boy's face slip, and his own heart clenched. Hiccup knew exactly what it felt like. The stranger quickly composed himself, though, and walked back outside with his things. The whole cafeteria paused again to watch as he left, his skin transforming back into that dark, dark blue once exposed to the sunlight.

Hiccup threw his things into his bookbag, hastily packing it all up before running outside also. With the bright sunshine, the day was actually mild and pleasant. Up ahead, he saw the new boy sitting on the lawn, leaning carelessly against the trunk of a tree. He approached at a jog, and cursed himself inwardly when he realized that even such a short distance, covered with his bookbag weighing him down, left him winded. He really was pathetic, wasn't he.

"Hi," he panted, hunching over and bracing his hands on his knees as he waited to recover his breath. The stranger just raised an eyebrow at him. "I was, uh, wondering if, uh, you wouldn't mind if I could join you?"

"No. I'm not letting you sit here so you can just stare at me and my 'freaky' skin," the bigger boy responded roughly.

"I'm not here to stare at you," Hiccup replied. "I wanted to know if you wanted company."

No answer.

"I get stared at every day, if it helps," Hiccup added, removing his backpack from his shoulder and resting it on the ground. "And I've lived here my whole life."

"Why, because you're so popular?" the other boy replied scathingly, giving Hiccup an evil glare. His voice was low and deep, a hint of a

growl at the back of his throat. He sounded angry and threatening, and Hiccup struggled not to take a step back in fear.

"No, actually. I get stared at because I'm a junior, and I'm barely fifteen. I also get stared at because I'm the school dork and everyone knows it. I get pushed and shoved and laughed at because I'm really smart, and because I'm so little and scrawny," Hiccup replied flatly, indignation rising up in his chest.

The other boy considered him through narrowed green eyes. In the yellow-green irises, Hiccup saw a wariness towards others that he knew was mirrored in himself.

"Take a seat," the older boy said at last.

"Thanks, um...?" Hiccup trailed off, looking at him for a name.

"Theodore Fury. Sometimes I go by Teddy, but don't call me Ted," Theodore explained in a warning tone. "You are?"

"Hiccup Haddock. I don't really have a nickname, but "You", "Hey Useless", and "Fishbone" have all been used before," Hiccup replied wryly, sitting down.

"Ah, so you have those kinds of names too?" Theodore asked, the barest hint of a smile pulling at his mouth. "I've been called "The Fury" and "Fang", along with "Dragon Skin"." Theodore offered.

"Why dragon skin?" Hiccup asked curiously, tilting his head to the side.

"Are you really that stupid?" Theodore asked, all trace of amusement vanishing instantly.

"No, I mean, I got that your skin changes colors and all, but why the dragon part?" the younger of the two asked persistently.

"My skin is kind of scaly too. It's all part of a rare birth defect, I've always had it," the oddly-skinned boy answered, this time less defensively.

"Oh. I've had the build of a fishbone my entire life, even though my entire family is bulky. Does that count as a birth defect?" Hiccup responded dryly.

To his surprise, Theodore chuckled. Most people didn't appreciate his sarcasm and odd sense of humor. They found it off-putting and labeled him as socially incompetent. But here was someone who didn't seem to mind.

"You're an odd one, Hiccup."

"I know."

4. In the Library

A/N:here's a new one for you! Still no more astrid/hiccup interaction, but at least I'm continuing the story. And if you

haven't already, please check out my other HTTYD story, "As The Skies Open." I've put a lot of work into it, and I'd love for more readers/reviewers on that one!

* * *

><p>Theodore strolled into the library at an ungodly hour of the morning. He rubbed his lime-green eyes groggily, plunking his head down unceremoniously onto the desk.<p>

"Mmmph," he groaned, covering his eyes from the light of the library with one ice-white hand. With no sunlight to be had, his skin had reverted to the blanched hue it took indoors. The rare skin condition had been brought on by some genetic mutation â€" in sunlight, his skin was dark, dark blue, almost black. Luckily, there were no terrible side effects to his health. At birth, the doctors told his parents they were incredibly lucky. The specialist had seen this same mutation in a very small number of people scattered all over the world â€" and all of them had terrible medical conditions caused by the same mutation.

Theodore had been gifted by his curse. He was healthy as a horse â€" strong, tall, athletically built, intelligent. He should have considered himself lucky, blessed even, that he wasn't on the verge of having a terminal genetic mutation, like the other two dozen or so people with this condition.

But it was so hard to consider himself lucky while he was the freak everywhere he went. People never stopped staring. Perhaps that was why he got himself into trouble so much, why his parents struggled to deal with his cynicism and negativity and bad attitude. He hadn't done anything serious â€" no drugs or gangs or anything (Theodore didn't dare mess with drugs, not when he didn't know how the substance would mess with his body). But he did talk back, he fought with other kids, and he had a serious reputation of being a "bad boy" (all helped along by the insane rumors that spread, especially in a small high school like Berk).

He was pretty sure that everyone expected him to murder Hiccup at any moment.

The geeky boy, almost two full years younger than himself, was the last person anyone expected someone like Theodore to hang out with. Theodore was over six feet tall, muscular, and menacing â€" even when his skin went from black-blue to white, he still had his black hair and thick dark eyebrows, which were usually drawn in a frown over his yellow-green eyes. Hiccup, meanwhile, was probably the least threatening person anyone would ever meet. The boy was just over fifteen years old, and a scrawny as a fishbone. He had inquisitive green eyes, a mop of messy auburn hair, and freckles all over his face. Furthermore, the kid was rather short, barely passing five and a half feet. He was an actual genius, Theodore was certain of this, but doubted anyone else actually realized just how intelligent the younger boy was. Had they seen any of his inventions, or looked at some of the physics work the boy did in his spare time? It was early graduate-school level material!

And in addition to being a misunderstood genius, Hiccup was the only reason Theodore was awake so early. He never would have bothered for anyone else.

"Hey, Toothless!" the skinny boy greeted, his voice all too chipper.

Theodore grunted in misery, not bothering to open his eyes or raise his head from the table. It took a minute for his brain to function well enough to form words, but finally he managed to groan, "_Toothless_? Really?"

That elicited a laugh from his friend. "Hey, people here call you 'Fang' and such because you're oh-so-scary. But you're really not, so you get the name 'Toothless'," Hiccup responded. Theodore could hear the smile in his voice.

"You're insane," he grumbled.

"I know," Hiccup replied.

"Remind me again why I bothered to get up this early?" Theo groaned.

"Because you're bored without me," the redhead shot back.

"Mmmph."

"Good morning to you too, sunshine," Hiccup snorted sarcastically.

"I thought I was Toothless," Theo muttered.

"Well, you didn't seem to like that name so much, so I guess I'll be using sunshine from now on," the younger boy chuckled mischeviously.

"Pest."

"Lazybutt."

"Morning person."

"That's not an insult," Hiccup burst out, laughing loudly. Luckily, the librarian was in the back room, and didn't shush them.

"Yes it is," Theo groaned in response.

"Only for someone nocturnal like you," his friend retorted.

"Okay, okay, you win," Theo conceded. Another laugh, this time quieter, and he heard the click as Hiccup popped open his laptop. Finally, the older boy lifted his head, giving a half-hearted glare to his companion, who was still smiling. It was a rather endearing smile, with Hiccup's two front teeth being just a bit too big in comparison to the rest. "What are you doing?"

"Looking for that last physics problem I was working on. I wanted to try part C, it looked cool," Hiccup responded absentmindedly, already absorbed.

"Just so you know, you're weird."

"I know," the younger of the two replied with a smirk. Theo noticed that even though other people teased Hiccup about being different, he reacted differently to them than he did to Theo's lighthearted comments. Perhaps it was because Theo himself was so different from everyone else, or perhaps it was because Theo knew exactly which words ("geek" "dork" "freak") were hurtful, having been subjected to them himself. Either way, Hiccup never froze up around him like he did around other people, and for that Theo was grateful. It had been a year since he'd had a real friend " and Theo wondered if Hiccup had ever had a good friend. From the snippets he'd picked up over the last three weeks, it didn't sound likely.

And at the risk of sounding like a complete girl, Theo felt as if he'd known Hiccup his entire life. He cringed just thinking it, it was so...sentimental, but it was like they were always meant to be friends. Hiccup adapted effortlessly to his rather sudden mood swings, and never seemed to be scared when Theo reacted unpleasantly to some incident, despite his frail build (not that Theo ever actually hurt him, but when he was mad he did tend to look rather dangerous.). Furthermore, Theo never laughed at Hiccup's eccentricities, and was plenty happy to listen when the younger boy needed to gripe about something. It was as if, for a very long time, no one had ever listened to the kid, and now he couldn't manage to keep anything inside for long.

About an hour later, the bell rang. Theo packed up his homework, which he'd luckily just finished working on, and turned to Hiccup. The younger boy was asleep, slumped over on his computer with his thin arms for a pillow. Theo stood and walked over to his friend's chair, gripping the dozing boy's shoulder. His hand was massive in comparison to Hiccup's slight frame, wrapping easily over both sides of his friend's shoulder. He could even feel the thin bones through Hiccup's favorite green jacket.

"Hiccup. Hiccup, the bell rang. It's time for class," Theo said softly. His friend mumbled, much like he did an hour earlier.

"Okay, 'kay," Hiccup sat up slowly, rubbing at his eyes. A bit groggy, he stored his laptop in his backpack, standing and exiting the library with the taller Theo.

"And eat more, would you? You need to be able to fight off Snot and the other bullies," Theodore scolded.

"Yeah, yeah, you keep saying that," Hiccup rolled his eyes, but grinned regardless.

"That's because I mean it. And if they give you any more trouble, let me know," Theo responded, more seriously this time. "It's not okay, what they do to you."

Hiccup sobered up too. "I know it's not. But that doesn't change anything," he said, rubbing his ribs where they both knew a large bruise would be forming. Theo had found Hiccup on the ground two days ago, after school, bent in half and winded. When his lungs had refilled themselves, the small boy explained that his cousin and some other football players had beaten him up when he refused to do their chemistry project for them. Hiccup had begged Theo not to tell anyone, fearing the bullying would only worsen if that happened. Theo

agreed reluctantly, and only because his friend looked so sad and pitiful already.

"I'm serious. I'll beat them up if they bother you again," Theo insisted.

"Thanks," Hiccup sighed, quirking a sad half-grin. They reached the end of one hallway, and the point at which their paths split. "See you later, Toothless."

Theo couldn't help but laugh at the bizarre name, but grinned and waved in parting. "See you at lunch," he called over his shoulder to his best friend.

* * *

><p>I know, not much in terms of plot, but I thought it'd be cute just to show a more firmly established friendship here! :D PLEASE REVIEW (shamless begging)<p>

ps: there may or may not be foreshadowing in this chapter. I'm interested to see if anyone spots it. ;D

5. Bloody Noses and Best Friends

A/N: WOW. You guys are amazing. Seriously, your reviews are the nicest and most heartwarming things EVER. I cannot express how sweet you have all been. So, I'm going to respond to some reviews here, AND I'm posting a new chapter earlier than normal as a kind of thanks

ZirciX: I cannot wait for the sequel either. I'm just hoping they don't butcher the story they've got going so far. But your review was so flattering. Your comment seriously just made my day, and I'm so glad you like this story. I hope it keeps you entertained.

TreepeltAll13 :Thank you so much! I'm so flattered you think I'm amazing. :D I'm glad you like the way I portrayed their friendship, and while this chapter focuses more on the sentimental side of their relationship, I hope you enjoy it just as much. I also hope you enjoy As The Skies Open, and happy reading!

MillionDollarNinja: Your prediction was correct! Congradulations, you just won a thousand virtual chocolate chip cookies (sorry, I have no real prize to offer)! But I hope you find this chapter rewarding.

And thank you to all my other reviewers! I'm sorry I can't respond to all of you right now, but I hope this chapter will make up for it. It focuses on the sentimental side of the Toothless/Theo and Hiccup friendship, and hopefully will give you reason to smile. :D Enjoy, and please review!

* * *

><p>Theodore wandered around the high school stadium. There was a football game in just under an hour, and as much as he hated the football players at Berk High, he was kind of stuck at the game. He'd

gotted detention from his psychology teacher for talking back again. Hiccup always tried to convince him that the defiance wasn't worth the drudgery of detention, but that hadn't stopped him yet. Theo got trash duty " clean up the immediate area around the stadium so it looked nice for the game. It was the big rivalry match " tensions ran high throughout the schooSl all day.<p>

Well, at least now it was nice an quiet. People probably wouldn't start showing up for another twenty minutes or so, and Theo only had ten minutes of detention left. He emptied the nearest trashcan, taking the bag to the dumpster, and walked around the corner to the backside of the stadium. It was much darker there than anywhere else, for the stadium lights created long shadows on this side.

For many other people, the backside of the stadium would have been intimidating, creepy, and even downright frightening. But Theo didn't scare easily " he'd never been afraid of the dark, and he was plenty capable of fighting off anyone who dared to bother him. He was over six feet tall, coated in lean muscle, and had faster reactions than most humans. He'd been trained in different defensive arts since he was four " some martial arts, some boxing. He never devoted himself to anything in particular " he was no martial arts champion " but he had a natural ability for fighting, especially hand-to-hand combat. He was strong and quick and smart " he never gave in to blind rage, and he kept his wits about him at all times.

Furthermore, if anyone came across him right now, they'd probably end up being the one scared. In addition to his imposing stature, Theo had an angular face, brows drawn in a natural frown over his eyes that made him look perpetually angry. His brows and hair were both black, but most frightening was his skin. It was pale while, without the sun out, and made his stern features look unnatural and menacing.

So Theo walked unperturbed to the nearest trashcan, and was about to haul it out when he heard a noise. There was a muffled squeal, and then two hushed voices from behind one of the stadium pillars. Theo stepped closer to listen.

"...you'll pay for this, you little -" Theo heard one voice cuss violently.

"Andrew can't play tonight, all thanks to you! You snitched, you got him caught for cheating on Mr. Langston's test!" the second voice hissed, furious. "We needed him for the game tonight!"

"Don't pretend it wasn't you. You were the only one done early, I _saw_ you talk to him! It was right after that he busted me!" the first voice accused again. Again came the muffled protests, as if whoever the two were picking on was gagged or had a hand covering their mouth.

There was a moment of silence, then the sound of someone getting punched. Then came a muffled yelp. Theo stepped closer, starting to wonder if he should break them up himself or get a teacher.

"Hold him, Snotlout. This little pipsqueak is gonna pay!" The first boy growled. Theo's eyes narrowed " Snotlout was everyone's nickname for Shaun, Hiccup's cousin. And everyone knew who his

favorite victim was.

"Stop! Stop! Please, Shaun!" A new voice pleaded, panicked. Theo froze in shock; he suspected Hiccup might be involved, but actually hearing his voice, especially when it was so desperate, was not something the older boy was prepared for.

Hiccup's voice was cut short by the sound of another punch, accented by a kick. Theo heard his friend cry out in pain, and anger rushed through him that two jocks had the nerve to think they could beat up his best friend and get away with it. Theo didn't think things through, he just ran. He rounded the pillar, and punched the guy who had attacked Hiccup as soon as it was clear which one he was. The boy dropped to the ground, clutching his face and grunting in pain. Theo then rounded on Snot, punching him right in the nose; not hard enough to break, but enough to give him a really bad nosebleed and two black eyes. Snotlout lost his grip on Hiccup, who dropped on his knees to the ground.

Theo didn't bother with tormenting the two football players further â€" he hauled Hiccup to his feet, and draped one of the scrawny boy's arms over his own shoulders.

"C'mon Hiccup," he urged.

"Dun take me to thu nurse," Hiccup responded thickly. Theo couldn't see what exactly was wrong with him, but the younger boy was limping pretty badly and it sounded like he'd gotten hit in either the mouth or the nose pretty hard.

"Why?" Theo asked incredulously.

"Becaud. It's ondly gunda make it worse wid dem," Hiccup groaned.

"Okay, okay. I think you're bleeding, so can we at least clean you up in the bathroom?" Theo asked. Hiccup nodded, so they made their way over to one of the boys bathrooms on campus. Inside, there was plenty of light, and Theo frowned.

Hiccup obviously was not built for abuse. His scrawny frame looked limp, as if even the short beating had sapped him of absolutely all energy. He already had a nasty black eye forming, and there was blood dripping from his nose and a scrape above one eyebrow. His reddish-brown hair was mussed, and the ends of his bangs were matted with a mix of dirt and blood.

"You're a mess," Theo scolded, grabbing a handful of paper towels and wetting them in the sink.

"I ndow," Hiccup replied, sagging gingerly against the wall. With the wet paper towels, Theo wiped away the worst of the blood and dirt, and gave his friend a dry paper towel to plug the nose bleed with.

After holding the towel to his nose for a moment, Hiccup pulled it away and examined it. Theo watched in alarm as the scrawny boy blanched, then swayed suddenly. The older of the two was forced to lunge forward and catch his friend before Hiccup hit the ground.

"Whoah!" Theo exclaimed, standing his friend upright again. This time, though, he kept his hands on the younger kid's shoulders to make sure he didn't fall over again. "You are not in good shape."

"Unghh." Hiccup mumbled in reply. "Don'd like blood."

Theo had to resist rolling his eyes. "Of course not. C'mon, let's get you home." And with that, he slung one of Hiccup's limp arms over his shoulders, and ended up half-carrying the semi-conscious boy to his car. By the time he got there, he was definitely worried about his friend. Hiccup was obviously too frail to be bullied, and he was only partially responsive.

"Hiccup. Hiccup!" he shook his friend. "Do I need to take you to the hospital? You look really bad."

"No," the boy groaned. "I'mb aldways like dis afder Sndot beats mbe up. Plus, I didn'd sleep mbuch last night."

"Why?" Theo asked as he started the engine.

"Looking indo research about your skind condition. You don'd say mbuch, but I ndow you hate it. I cand tell," Hiccup mumbled. Theo was touched by his friend's words â€" even though he thought it was ridiculous for Hiccup to lose sleep over trying to help his strange genetic mutation, it was by far the nicest thing anyone had ever done for him.

"Thanks, buddy," Theo said quietly, turning to smile at his friend while they were stopped at a red light.

"No problemb. Dat's what friends are for, right?" Hiccup responded weakly.

"Yup."

So Theo took Hiccup home, and helped him get cleaned and bandaged up from his beating. They weren't forced to sneak around, because Hiccup's father had not yet returned home. In all likelyhood, he was probably at the football game right now â€" a famous football coach, he volunteered with the high school team, and everyone knew he was a large part of their success.

After several minutes of wiping the blood and grime off Hiccup's face, and disinfecting his wounds, Theo bid his friend goodbye. Right as he was leaving, Hiccup said something, his voice much clearer now that the blood had been cleaned from his nose.

"Hey, on Saturday, do you mind coming over here?" Hiccup asked, fidgeting a little bit.

"Isn't your dad home on Satudays? I thought you didn't want him knowing anything."

"Yeah...but I changed my mind. He doesn't like people who are...different, like you. I guess that's why he doesn't like me much. But I want to show him I don't care what he thinks. I don't think my best friend should have to be a secret."

Theo smiled. He knew it took a lot of courage for Hiccup to make that decision, and that it would take even more when he acutally met Hiccup's dad.

"Works for me, buddy. And for the record, you're my best friend too."

Hiccup rushed at him then, hugging him briefly. Theo was taken by surprise by the sudden display of affection, but hugged back. After all, no one else was here to see him lose his tough facade, and Hiccup already knew that it was all just a mask.

It was awesome to have a best friend.

* * *

><p>There! I hope you liked it, and please review! Also, check out my profile and take a look at some of my other stories, if you'd be so kind!<p>

6. Meeting Stoick

A/N: oh, guys, I'm so sorry, it's been months! I have no excuse. please forgive me, review, and tell me what interests you or what you would like to see next! :)

* * *

><p>Saturday rolled around, and Theo rolled out of bed later than usual. Grumbling to himself, he quickly showered and then pulled on a pair of jeans and a tee-shirt. He grabbed a breakfast bar from the pantry, and then headed out to the garage. He needed his car, for he promised Hiccup he would drive over today. Theo would have said goodbye to his own parents on his way out the door, with his late-rising, his father was already at work and his mother had left to run errands.<p>

He hopped into his undersized truck, gunned the engine, and quickly pulled out. As he drove, he wondered if he should be nervous. Perhaps. Hiccup had said his father didn't take kindly to people who were different. And Theo's rare skin condition, which even now made half of his arm black-blue from the sun, while the rest of it was shaded and icy-white, was nothing if not "different". The famous coach, Steven Haddock, was nicknamed "Stoick the Vast" in the football world for both his intimidating size â€" 6'7"and over 300 pounds â€" and his voice, which boomed across the field without any amplifying assistance. He was known to be unflappable â€" sure, he got angry, but he never let his team give up. He'd made huge successes of next-to-nothing teams. He was a legend, he was powerful, and he was dangerous to anger.

Yet Theo wasn't worried. He'd spent ten years learning different types of combat â€" his mother put him up to it, hoping it would give him an outlet for the anger he always seemed to have. That, of course, stemmed from his genetic mutation. At seven, he didn't really understand why his was different â€" only that he was, and that he hated getting picked on and stared at for it. But his mother, unsurprisingly, was right. It did help. He stopped getting into quite

so much trouble, and though he still wasn't exactly a happy kid, his attitude did improve. Over the years, he'd gotten talented. He wasn't world-class, by any means, but he knew enough to protect himself in most situations.

So he figured he could handle whatever Hiccup's dad threw his way. Plus, he doubted the man would get violent " from Hiccup's descriptions, he sounded surly more than anything.

Finally, Theo pulled into the driveway. Their house was definitely on the large size " while not a mansion, "Stoick" clearly enjoyed showing off. It was a really nice neighborhood too, for the surrounding houses appeared just as affluent. The seventeen year old turned off the engine and clambered out of his truck, slinging his backpack strap over one shoulder. Besides just hanging out, Hiccup promised to work with him on their physics project.

Of course, "work with" meant Hiccup came up with most of the ideas, while Theo constructed the thing. Hiccup, of course, explained the whole thing to Theo so that he learned, too. The older boy didn't mind. He knew better than to get in between Hiccup and a device of some kind. Plus, he'd rather keep his friend away from sharp objects. Hiccup was still a little worse for the wear from the incident behind the stadium yesterday.

Theo walked up the porch and knocked on the oversized french doors. The style of this house didn't seem to match what Theo would have thought Stoick would like. He wondered if Hiccup's mom was the one who selected this house.

Suddenly, he heard voices from inside.

"I got it," Hiccup's muffled voice echoed. Faint footsteps followed his words.

"Son," a new voice sounded, infinitely deeper. It was almost completely clear, even through the thick walls of the house. That was Hiccup's dad, then. There was silence. "Hiccup, what happened?"

"Nothing, dad. Just a few of your precious football players having a joke," even through the doors, Theo could hear the bitterness and sarcasm that littered Hiccup's tone when the younger boy was upset.

"What do you mean. Hiccup!" his father's voice commanded.

"I saw Andrew Stanleys cheating on a test, so I reported him to the teacher. That's why he was suspended and couldn't play in the game. So he and Shaun decided to get a little revenge."

"Couldn't you have waited till the next day to report him, Hiccup? That was an important game! Some scouts were there, and he didn't get the chance to show them what he could do!"

"_That's_ what you got out of that, Dad?" Hiccup cried in disbelief. Theo cringed. Apparently, Hiccup's relationship with his dad was even worse than described. "Why do I even bother..."

"Don't take that tone with me!"

"Sorry, Dad, but if you'll excuse me, I have a friend waiting out front," Hiccup deadpanned, and the footsteps started up again.

Theo just stood there, waiting patiently. He purposefully stood half-in and half-out of the sunlight, making part of his face dark blue, while the rest was extremely pale.

Finally, the door creaked open.

"Hey, Toothless," Hiccup greeted with a half-smile. "Sorry 'bout the wait."

"Not a problem. Hey, you look worse than yesterday," Theo half-joked. It was true, though. Even though his nose no longer bled, the black eye from yesterday had turned an ugly purple-yellow color. Other, fainter bruises mottled Hiccup's freckled face, and he walked with a little bit of a limp today.

"Yeah, yeah, I know," the red-haired boy responded with a real smile this time. He opened the door wider, gesturing for his friend to come in.

"Hiccup." Stoick's voice boomed from further down the hall. "What's the meaning of this?"

"This is my best friend, Toothless," Hiccup responded flatly. "I invited him over."

"'Toothless?'" Stoick echoed, thick red brows drawn together in disapproval.

"My real name's Theodore. 'Toothless' is just sort of a joke," Theo responded with fake cheer, smiling broadly.

"Hiccup, you know I don't like people coming over," Stoick reprimanded, his voice a low growl. He caught his son's wrist as the boy passed, effectively halting his progress. Theo was suddenly struck by just how small Hiccup was in comparison to his father. He was more than a full foot shorter, and about a third of Stoick's girth. Almost his entire forearm was enveloped by his father's hand. Theo bent his knees, subtly shifting into a fighting stance in case Stoick got violent. He wouldn't just stand by and watch the abuse.

He needn't have worried. Hiccup scowled, yanking his arm from his father's grasp.

"I did tell you. I called your phone last night, but you were at the game so you didn't pick up," Hiccup spoke sharply, bitterness once again entering his tone. "C'mon, Toothless. We've got a physics project to work on," the younger boy spoke up.

Theo followed his friend up the large staircase, and into a large room with walls painted a soothing gray-green. The room was somewhat messy — the bed wasn't made, and odd scribbles, designs, and notes lay strewn on the desk and around it.

"Hey, Hiccup, can I ask you something?" Theo broke the silence. "Your dad, he doesn't...he's not..."

"No, he doesn't hit me or abuse me or anything," Hiccup turned to face his friend, finishing his thought. "I promise. He's never beaten me. My mom would come back from the grave and kill him if he ever even thought of it," Hiccup joked. Theo locked his eyes with his friend's. Despite the attempt to lighten the mood, he knew Hiccup was telling the truth.

"Okay, just making sure," he responded, leaning against the wall.

"I don't blame you. It doesn't exactly look good," Hiccup acknowledged.

"Then what's the deal?" Theo asked.

"He just...doesn't get me. He doesn't understand why I don't like football, why I like physics, why I've been begging him to let me start college for the past few years. I know he wishes he had a better son. He and my mom were both super tall and fit and athletic, and I'm...not. Just a scrawny little fishbone," Hiccup laughed sadly.

"That doesn't seem fair."

"Well, it's not your fault, is it?" Hiccup responded. "And sorry about the whole, I-don't-like-people-over thing. Mom picked out this house and her personal touch is kinda everywhere...and I think he doesn't want other people messing things up. He â€" _We_ never really got over losing her," the younger boy finished quietly.

Feeling awkward just standing there, Theo walked over and patted his best friend on the shoulder. "I'm sorry. It must have been tough."

"It was...is," Hiccup sighed, dipping his head to hide his eyes, which Theo suspected were a little less than dry at the moment. Theo reached over further, giving Hiccup a quick but firm side-hug. The younger boy cleared his throat, in what Theo guessed was an attempt to disguise his sniffing. "So...um, physics?"

Theo smiled understandingly. "Sure thing."

Hiccup returned the smile gratefully.

* * *

><p>okay, done! not too terrible exciting, but a little more insight into Hiccup's home life. I hope you enjoyed, and please, please, please review!<p>

End
file.